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V CORPS AIR DEFENDERS COMPETE IN ANNUAL CREW CHALLENGE AND STINGER MISSILE LIVE-FIRE

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GIEBELSTADT ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany — Stinger missile crewmembers from the two air defense artillery battalions of V Corps' 69th ADA Brigade showed off their skills in their annual "best crew competition" and live-fire exercise in Putlos, Germany last month.

Soldiers of the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, based in Hanau, Germany and the 6th Battalion, 52nd ADA in Ansbach, Germany took part in the event.

Six Stinger missile crews from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, U.S. Army Southern European Task Force (SETAF) stationed in Vicenza, Italy, joined the 69th ADA Brigade Soldiers for the live-fire.



CAPT J. ADAM FALK
Sgt. Eric E. Hughes (center) helps Sgt. Brian Roberts locate a remote-controlled aerial target during the Stinger missile crew competition and live-fire in Putlos, Germany. Both Soldiers are assigned to the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery. Range safety officer Sgt. 1st Class John M. Telgenhof of the 5/7th's parent unit, V Corps' 69th ADA Brigade, observes the crew's actions.

The event may very well mark the last Stinger live-fire by the U.S. Army in Germany, due to changes in the air defense branch which will retire the Stinger

system and reclassify the Stinger crewmembers into another military occupational specialty.

The FIM-92A Stinger is a man-portable, shoulder-fired, surface to air missile used for short-range air defense. Current enemy threat capabilities make the weapon system less applicable on the modern battlefield.

"From what I hear, this will be the last Stinger live-fire. It's cool to be a part of that and to be in one last competition," said Spc. Matthew M. Antonelli of the 6/52nd ADA.

Thirteen Stingers were fired during the live-fire that capped the event. The outcome of the best crew competition determined the order in which the crews would fire. Antonelli and his fellow team member, Staff Sgt. James N. Davis, won the best crew competition and the right to fire first.

"We spent weeks doing crew drills during sergeants time and PT (physical training) two times a day to prepare for the competition," said Antonelli.

The extra PT paid off for the crew, who edged out their win largely due to their speed on the competition's 12-mile rucksack march.

1st Battalion, 4th ADA Soldiers evaluated the crews' performance through six events: a military vehicle and aircraft recognition test; a gunnery certification in a moving target simulator; crew drills; a general knowledge test; the PT test and the rucksack march.

"The competition was held over four days with a down day for Soldiers to recover before the live-fire on the sixth day," said 1st Lt. Mark Nussbaum, officer in charge of the event.

"I thought the competition went well ... The events were well organized and safely executed, but the live-fire was the highlight of the week. It's always a pleasure to see missiles go 'downrange' and destroy a target," said Sgt. Eric E. Hughes of the 5/7th ADA.

"An event like this really boosts morale by getting us to compete against one another.

Although we have to [reclassify] the reality is that we're not out of a job yet," said Pfc. Ryan A. Hanagan of the 5/7th ADA.

"The Soldiers came to Putlos with an open mind and put forth a tremendous effort. It's great to see this level of dedication," said Nussbaum.

